

Nugget Creek

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve



Access: Trailhead is located on Kotsina Road. Kotsina Rd turn-off is located at mile 14.5 of the McCarthy Rd, on the north side of the road. After about 2½ miles, the trailhead for Nugget Creek Trail is on the right. Parking at the trailhead requires permission and a small fee from the Chitina Native Corporation.

Distance: Approximately 15 miles one way.

Time: Allow 2-3 days round-trip and more time to do exploring.

Maps: USGS Maps-Valdez (C-1); McCarthy (C-8) 1:63,360; Valdez, McCarthy 1:250,000

Difficulty: Easy and level, with moderate stream crossings. Occasional gentle climbs. This is a nice route for mountain biking, ATVs, and snowmobile travel.

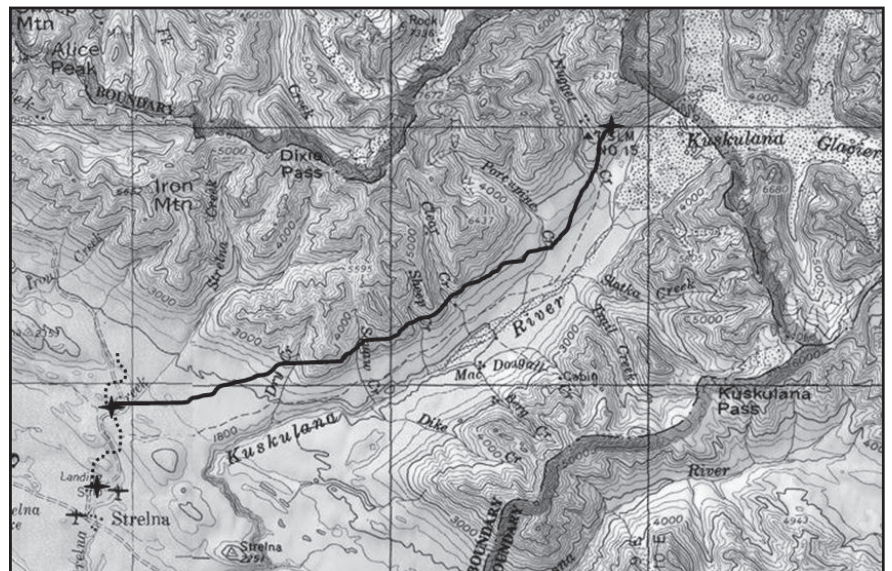
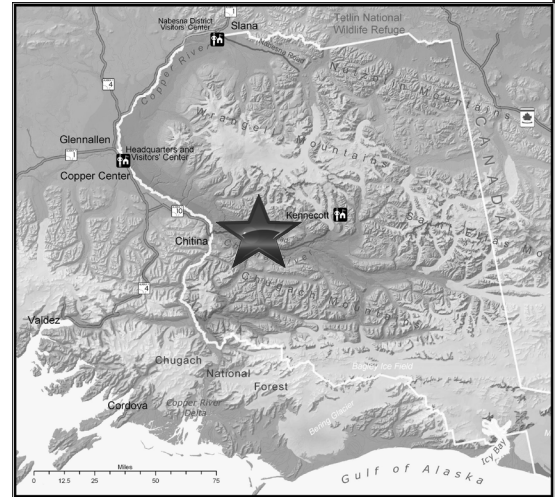
Highlights: Road accessible, public cabin, great views of Mt. Blackburn

Route: The trail begins with a ford at Strelina Creek. Some wet and possibly muddy trail conditions will be encountered. This beginning portion is along an easement across private land which ends at approximately 3400 feet. Please do not camp in the first two miles. Drinking water may be difficult to find for the first 5 miles. After several miles, the trail gains some elevation and conditions are drier, making for relatively easy hiking for the remaining 13 miles.

There are small camping areas and water at Squaw, Clear and Sheep Creeks. These creeks are small and may have little or no water during drier weather conditions. Nugget Creek, near the end of the trail is the largest crossing after Strelina Creek. At very high run-off Nugget Creek may be impassible. The public use cabin is directly across the creek. There is a small camping area with a bear resistant food locker located on the west side of Nugget Creek.

Hazards: Swift and cold melt water streams may have sudden changes in water volume and velocity due to heavy precipitation upstream or excessive snowmelt caused by warm temperatures. Be prepared for various types of inclement weather, including rain and possible snow. Excursions onto the Kuskulana Glacier should not be attempted without prior knowledge and experience in glacier travel and safety. Proper food storage is required.

Notes: At the end of the trail there is a public use cabin that can be reserved by calling (907) 822-7253.



Nugget Creek Cabin

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Location: Refer to USGS Maps: McCarthy 1:250,000; McCarthy 1:63,360 (C-8). N61.626122, W143.713382

Reservations: Required April 1 - September 30. Please call (907) 822-7253 to reserve. Reservations can be made six months in advance. The maximum stay in the cabin is 7 days in a 30 day period.

Access: Cabin can be reached from the 14-mile Nugget Creek Trail. Trailhead is located on the Kotsina Road. Kotsina Rd turn-off is at mile 14.5 of the McCarthy Rd, on the north side of the road. Cabin can be accessed by foot, horse, mountain bike, ATV (with a permit), or small airplane at a nearby gravel airstrip.

Description: This cabin is on the north side of Nugget Creek at about 3,000' elevation. Nugget Creek feeds into the Kuskulana River about 1/4 mile downstream from the cabin. Cabin is 15 ft by 19 ft and contains a woodstove, table and chairs, fire extinguisher, pit toilet, and four standard twin wooden bunks. You must bring all personal belongings that you will require, including sleeping and dining equipment. Please clean the cabin and take all food and trash with you upon departure. Burying garbage is prohibited. Dogs are allowed, but please clean up after your pet. Please do not remove or relocate any artifacts or deface cabins or historic structures. There are numerous bugs in this area. Headnets and bug spray are strongly encouraged during June, July, and August.

Water & Firewood: Visitors may gather dead and down wood for firewood. Replenish any firewood stored in the cabin for the next user. Water can be obtained about 50 yds away from Nugget Creek.

Recreational Opportunities: The trail ends at the cabin, but there are opportunities to explore and hike beyond the cabin. Visitors can do off-trail hiking to the terminus of the Kuskulana glacier. A trail extends for 1.5 miles beyond the cabin to access the old mine sites at the 3,800' elevation on the bench above Nugget Creek. Nearby Nugget Creek is not suitable for fishing and there are no other lakes or streams nearby. If you want to try finding a suitable fishing spot, it is recommended that you acquire a State of Alaska fishing license, as this is required to fish. This cabin is located in the park, so sport hunting is not allowed. Subsistence hunting is allowed, which is limited to local, rural residents. A State of Alaska hunting license is required and a federal subsistence hunting permit may be required. Please refer to state and federal hunting regulations. This cabin is often used during hunting season so reserve as early as possible. Snowmachines are allowed on the trail, provided that at least six inches of snow covers the ground. Recreational ATV use is allowed on this trail - a permit is required.

Airstrip: 900' gravel airstrip, approximately 200 yards from the cabin.

